

will be stationed all over the world to protect and defend the United States of America.

There are about 1.3 million military personnel on Active Duty who serve in more than 170 countries. While it is not easy to be away from family, it is especially difficult during the holidays.

But, Mr. Speaker, events like American Red Cross' Holiday Mail for Heroes card-signing campaign lets our troops know that we are keeping them in our thoughts and prayers. Since 2007, the Holiday Mail for Heroes program has provided Americans the opportunity to extend holiday greetings, expressions of gratitude, and well wishes to servicemembers, veterans, and their families. Last year, the Red Cross distributed thousands of cards to troops across the globe.

As we are extending our support to military personnel serving overseas, the Marine Corps Reserve is giving back to those who are less fortunate right here in our own backyard. Toys for Tots, which was founded in 1947 by Reservist Major Bill Hendricks, collects new, unwrapped toys each year and distributes them as Christmas gifts to children in need. As of 2016, Toys for Tots collected and distributed more than 512 million toys to less fortunate children.

That kind of selflessness truly embodies the spirit of Christmas.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot forget to honor our fallen heroes this Christmas season. One of our finest holiday traditions that honors our fallen servicemembers took place last Saturday: Wreaths Across America.

Many Americans can recall the iconic photograph of wreaths on the tombstones at Arlington National Cemetery. Snow blankets the ground. Red ribbons adorn the balsam wreaths, which lay on rows of tombstones as far as the eye can see.

This annual tribute began in 1992 by a Maine wreathmaker named Morrill Worcester, who donated 5,000 wreaths to Arlington National Cemetery in honor of our fallen heroes.

Today, Wreaths Across America has grown into a national organization. A total of 1.2 million wreaths were placed on markers across the country in more than 1,200 locations, with more than 200,000 at Arlington National Cemetery alone. The mission is to remember, honor, and teach. Morrill describes the wreaths as a symbol of honor, respect, and victory.

As we celebrate with our loved ones, let us remember all of our military men and women, especially those we lost in service to this Nation. Thank you to Morrill and to all the volunteers who honor their memory.

Mr. Speaker, I thank all of our troops serving at home and overseas. I wish them a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Merry Christmas and God bless America.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY BIVENS RETIREMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. KUSTOFF) for 5 minutes.

Mr. KUSTOFF of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a great west Tennessean and a dear friend of mine, District Attorney General Phil Bivens.

After more than 25 remarkable years, Phil Bivens is retiring from his post as district attorney general of Tennessee's 29th judicial district, which covers both Dyer and Lake Counties.

Since 1992, Phil Bivens has been the consistent voice of law and order in his community. District Attorney General Bivens is a lifelong resident of Dyer County and a graduate of the University of Tennessee at Martin and the University of Memphis School of Law.

Throughout his career as a prosecutor, District Attorney General Bivens has handled some incredibly important cases and has earned a reputation for being fair, honest, and by the book.

In 2016, District Attorney General Bivens was elected to the executive committee for the Tennessee District Attorneys General Conference. Serving in this respected leadership role, he has advised the Tennessee General Assembly on issues related to the criminal justice system.

When I was the United States Attorney for the Western District of Tennessee, I also served Dyer and Lake Counties, so we worked together very closely. We worked together to tackle dangerous crimes and drug crimes. Most recently, District Attorney General Bivens has been instrumental in combating the growing opioid crisis that is hurting west Tennessee and certainly the entire country. During our time together, I saw firsthand District Attorney General Bivens' strong work ethic and dedication to making west Tennessee a safer place. He is a true public servant.

In addition to being known as a prosecutor, he is also the voice of the Dyersburg High School football team. District Attorney General Bivens spends Friday nights calling some of the most thrilling high school football games in the Nation.

In summary, District Attorney General Bivens is a real west Tennessee legend. While he may soon no longer be our district attorney general, I know that he will never stop working to make his community a better place, just as he has his entire life. I will always be grateful for the time that we worked together.

I wish Phil Bivens; his wife, Barbara; and their whole family the best as they begin their next exciting chapter.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 10 a.m. today.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 11 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

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AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: Lord of Heaven and Earth, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

Darkness descends upon us as the days grow shorter, and the cold chastens us to withdraw inside. Be for us the light we long for. The very promise of change creates expectation.

By the first hints of Your dawn, banish all fear and hesitation. May those who live on the margins of America's rich blessings have peace and prosperity too.

Because You are always faithful, strengthen us with Your mighty arm, that this Congress may be unified in lifting Your people to renewed hope.

May all that is done in the people's House be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.